

**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**

**Public Utilities Commission**

**Minutes of Open Meeting Held August 28, 2002**

**Attendees: Chairman Elia Germani, Commissioner Kate Racine, Commissioner Brenda Gaynor, Steve Frias, Cindy Wilson, Thomas Massaro, Alan Nault, Douglas Hartley and Donna Conway.**

**Chairman Germani called the open meeting to order at 11:15 AM in the first-floor hearing room of the Public Utilities Commission. A quorum was present.**

**Competitive Telecommunications Service Providers:**

The following company registered for authority to operate as telecommunications service providers in RI. The Division reviewed the registration and recommends approval of:

2262(H17) - Choice Telco LLC

After review, Chairman Germani asked for a motion and Commissioner Racine moved to approve the registration. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gaynor and unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

The following companies submitted tariff revisions. The Division has reviewed the tariff filings and does not recommend suspension of:

2702 - Verizon Select Services, Inc.

2736 - Conversent Communications of RI, LLC

3459 - Broadview NP Acquisition Corp.

2262(F16) - Bell Atlantic Communications, Inc.

2262(G16) - NYNEX Long Distance Co.

2262(L4) - TTI National, Inc.

2262(C1) - Cable & Wireless USA, Inc.

2262(A6) - Southwestern Bell Communications

After review, the Commission followed the Division's recommendation that the tariff filings be allowed to go into effect without suspension.

The following companies ceased operations in RI and request that their authority to provide telecommunications services be rescinded. The Division supports the requests of:

3007 - Telergy Network Services, Inc.

3081 - Gemini Networks RI, Inc.

After review, Chairman Germani asked for a motion and Commissioner Racine moved to rescind the registrations of the companies. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gaynor and unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

**3460 – Verizon Rhode Island:** The Company submitted a tariff filing to restructure the incremental surcharge for Customer Dialed – Collect and Billing-to-Third Number calls to create a separate rate element call Corrections Collect Call for effect September 1,

2002. The Corrections Collect Calls surcharge will apply solely to calls from prisons and jails. The Division has reviewed the tariff filing and does not recommend suspension. The Commission will follow the Division's recommendation.

**3465 – Verizon Rhode Island:** The Company submitted a tariff filing to introduce feature enhancements to Custom Redirect Service for effect September 14, 2002. Customer Redirect Service enables customers to redirect all or part of their incoming voice and data calls to other number. The enhancements proposed will provide additional flexibility to current and future subscribers. The Division has reviewed the tariff filing and does not recommend suspension. The Commission will follow the Division's recommendation.

**3401 – New England Gas Co.:** Discussion and final review of the Company's compliance tariff filing made on June 14. At a hearing on June 21, the Commission approved the filing on an interim basis subject to further review and comment from the Division. The Division has submitted testimony recommending approval of the compliance filing with an amendment to Section 3 of the compliance tariff, Distribution Adjustment Charge, paragraph 3.5 On-System Credits. The Company agreed to make the changes recommended by the Division.

After review, Commissioner Racine moved to approve the filing and Commissioner Gaynor seconded the motion. **Vote 3-0.**

**3444 – Narragansett Electric Co.:** Discussion regarding continued need for the 4.5¢ floor on the non-residential Last Resort Service rate. The undercollection for which the 4.5¢ floor was originally established has been paid and there is a possibility that market rates for LRS could fall below 4.5¢/kWh. Therefore, at the most recent LRS hearing in Docket #3444, the Commission questioned whether or not there is still a sound policy reason for keeping the 4.5¢ floor. The parties agreed at the hearing that such a policy change would require notice and an opportunity for comments to be made. However, unless requested by a party, a hearing would not be necessary.

Commissioner Gaynor moved to accept comments from interested parties regarding the need to continue the policy of setting LRS rates at the higher of 4.5¢/kWh or at the market price. Commissioner Racine seconded the motion. **Vote 3-0.**

The Commission will direct Commission Clerk Luly Massaro to publish a notice in The Providence Journal and on the PUC website requesting that comments be filed by interested parties not later than one month from the date notice is published.

**Narragansett Electric Co.:** Commissioner Racine asked that the company be lenient and patient with customers who may have a hard time paying a full month's bill because of high energy use due to the constant use of air conditioners during this summer's heat waves. She suggested that agreements be reached with customers who request such agreements in order to spread out higher than normal bills over a period of time. Commissioner Gaynor suggested that even though the moratorium is not currently in

effect that she felt confident the utilities would follow those guidelines in order to help customers who request assistance with high bills. Chairman Germani agreed that reminding the company of using payment plans will go a long way to assisting those customers that need it.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.